

# History of the Dogcow, Part 2

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by **MARK ("THE RED") HARLAN**

In [Issue 17](#), we told part 1 of the history of the dogcow. We'll warn you again: If you don't know what or who the dogcow is, or you don't care for Apple cultural minutiae, you should just flip past this column.

## DISTRIBUTION OF TECH NOTE #31

We left off at the point where the former Macintosh Technical Note #31, "The Dogcow," had been created. The question then was how to distribute it. Mark Johnson and I both thought that since it was an April Fool's joke anyway, the best thing would be to just include it in the April monthly mailing to Apple Partners and Associates; we'd drop it from the subsequent batches, with the direct intent of making it a curio. The idea was that the people who were currently in the Macintosh community would get it and everyone else wouldn't. We very intentionally were trying to build an aura around it. The April 1989 mailing is the only time this Tech Note was ever in print under the official auspices of Apple.

There was a bit of a lag time between the writing of the Note and the actual release; by the time it went out, I actually had forgotten about it. The response was immediate and intense. Internally I received a couple of vaguely threatening calls from people claiming false ownership, but the overwhelming majority of people thought it was great. One gentleman in the developer community took offense saying that "dogcow" was too close to "Dachau" and showed how the note had underpinnings of anti-Semitism. (I showed this one to my Jewish father-in-law, who had to be resuscitated, he was laughing so hard.)

Aside from that, it really struck a chord with the developer community like nothing I've seen before or since. I received about 40 pieces of fan mail that month. Developer Technical Support (DTS) must have gone for a year before there was a batch of e-mail that didn't have a dogcow reference in it. In fact, to this day people say to me, "Mark Harlan? I know your name from Tech Notes" -- but it's the only one I ever wrote.

Then came the concept of a Developer CD as a vehicle for distributing Tech Notes electronically (along with sample code and more). I was overseeing that project, and immediately we had an interesting conundrum: We wanted all information in electronic format, yet what were we going to do with Tech Note #31? Merely slipping it into the Tech Notes stack seemed like disaster, but then it didn't really feel right to omit it.

Again, it was Mark Johnson who came to the rescue with the excellent idea of burying the Tech Note. So on the early CD, "Phil and Dave's Excellent CD," you have to go through a bizarre sequence of commands to bring it up. Even now, tradition requires that I not give the details, but it involves Shift-Option-clicking and typing "grazing off a cliff," and it emits "[Moof!](#)" and "Foom!" sounds. (For the "[Moof!](#)" sound we took a real cow and then Zz said "fff" into a MacRecorder; the "Foom!" is just the same sound played backwards.) It took a while for anyone to find the Note using any technique, and I've never heard of anyone doing it except through ResEdit.

The Note stayed on the first few Developer CDs. The access technique changed from disc to disc, and not even I knew how to do it after the original "Phil and Dave." Somewhere along the line the Note was dropped from the CD altogether.

## OTHER DOGCOW PARAPHERNALIA

Bootleg T-shirts started appearing. There was an apartment near Apple headquarters that started flying a dogcow flag. The stack version of the Note had a watermarked background that someone removed pixel by pixel before posting it to the Internet. Several developers were nearly thrown out of a movie theater at MacHack for "Moofing" before a movie.

In addition to the Tech Note there are three pins: green background, the most common; red background with Kanji (the word on the pin actually is pronounced "Moo-aann!" because Japanese dogs don't woof, they say something like "aann-aann"); and the super-rare red background with "[Moof!](#)", which are misprints of the Kanji batch. Also, there's a dogcow window sticker. All of these were given away in DTS labs, and all but the window sticker have been collected up a long time ago.

If you think of the dogcow fathers as being Zz Zimmerman, Mark Johnson, and me, there's only one dogcow shirt that received our supervision and approval: the black DTS sweatshirt with the small dogcow on the chest (designed by Toni Trujillo). I also designed the graphic for a DTS gift that was a shoulder bag with all incarnations of the dogcow on it (flipped, rotated, and inverted). Unfortunately the bag was incredibly cheap and most of them have self-destructed.

Chris Derossi and Mary Burke designed a dogcow mousepad and even went so far as to call Pepsi-Cola to get the exact color of Mountain Dew green for the background. They made 500 of these and I wrote an insert that went into the packaging. Aside from the original Tech Note, it's the only thing I've ever written about dogcattle -- until these develop columns.

## DOGCOW TRIVIA

Somewhere along the line I baptized the dogcow "Clarus." Of course she's a female, as are all cows; males would be referred to as dogbulls, but none exist because there are already bulldogs, and God doesn't like to have naming problems.

Now things are much bigger than they were then -- both in number of developers and number of Apple employees. The dogcow regularly appears on documents that are no longer connected to DTS, or in some cases (such as Scott Knaster's books) not even from Apple. In a sense, the dogcow has become mainstream; people are copying it -- and that's exactly what I was fighting against in the first place (not to mention that she, and her "[Moof!](#)" cry, are bona fide trademarks of Apple Computer). To put a stop to all this, I'm threatening to kill her off, but develop's editor has become such a fan that she's not sure she'll accept a "Dogcow is Dead" column. Stay tuned!

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MARK ("THE RED") HARLAN went through extensive deprogramming after six years at Apple. Unfortunately, the therapy didn't hold and he has since joined yet another cult: General Magic. In a recent interview, Mark was asked if he had any words of wisdom on the dogcow. "Yeah. Warn everyone that both the dogcow logo and '[Moof!](#)' are trademarks of Apple Computer. You don't ever want to be in the position of having to answer 'What are you in for?' with 'Bootleg T-shirts.'"

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